This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated October 6, 2006. Claims 1 to 4, 7 to 9, 26 and 27 are pending in the application, of which Claims 1, 8 and 9 are independent. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 2, 8, 9 and 27 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over JP 8-30717 (Matsubayashi) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,579,416 (Shibuya), and in further view of U.S. Patent No. 3,295,105 (Gray). Claim 4 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Matsubayashi in view of Shibuya, in further view of Gray, and in further view of U.S. Patent No. 5,513,278 (Hashizume). Claim 7 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Matsubayashi in view of Shibuya, in further view of Gray, and in further view of U.S. Patent No. 4,962,465 (Saito). Reconsideration and withdrawal of these rejections are respectfully requested.

Claim 8 is directed to an image processing method. The method comprises reading an image in an original, detecting first character size information concerning a character in the image, recognizing a character in the image, and reading a character font from a storing unit in response to a result of character recognition. The method further comprises setting a magnification information based on an instruction by an operator, determining second character size based on the first character size and the magnification information, selecting a type of the character font based on an instruction by an operator, and generating a reproduced image, which includes characters having the second character size, based on the read character font, the type of which is selected by said selecting step, wherein said generating step generates said reproduced image by combining the characters

with a plurality of kinds of character gaps in accordance with the magnification information and the second character size.

Claims 1 and 9 are directed to an apparatus and recording medium, respectively, substantially in accordance with the method of Claim 8.

Applicant submits that, Matsubayashi, Shibuya, and Gray, either alone or in combination, fail to disclose or suggest at least the features of determining second character size based on the first character size and the magnification information; selecting type of the character font based on an instruction by an operator; and generating a reproduced image, which includes characters having the second character size, based on the read character font, type of which is selected by said selecting step, wherein said generating step generates said reproduced image by combining the characters with a plurality of kinds of character gaps in accordance with the magnification information and the second character size.

Matsubayashi discloses a device which extracts feature information from input image data, compares the extracted information with a dictionary, and outputs character code information which is best-matched as a result of the comparison. However, Matsubayashi fails to disclose selecting a type of the character font based on an instruction by an operator; and generating a reproduced image, which includes characters having the second character size, based on the read character font, the type of which is selected by said selecting step, wherein said generating step generates said reproduced image by combining the characters with a plurality of kinds of character gaps in accordance with the magnification information and the second character size.

Gray discloses detecting and using a character gap between scanned characters in order to recognize a character. (See Gray, FIG. 6e, column 7, lines 9 to 31). However, Applicant respectfully submits that, while it may be obvious that an use of a scanned image is create a reproduction (as the Examiner contends through official notice) it does not necessarily follow that Gray's disclosure of detecting a character gap also suggests how the character gap may be used to create a reproduction. Furthermore, such a use would only require reproduction of each existing character gap and not generating a reproduced image by combining the characters with a plurality of kinds of character gaps in accordance with the magnification information and the second character size as featured in Claim 8.

Shibuya discloses a prototype memory storing a plurality of type vector fonts or prototypes. A rewritable memory area stores parameters corresponding to the type vector fonts which can be registered by a user. When character data in a vector font data memory or a prototype designation is instructed, the character data which is read out of the vector font data memory on the basis of the parameter stored in the prototype memory is converted into the vector font of the instructed type by the pattern generator and displayed on a CRT display or printed on a printer. (See column 4, lines 15 to 31). However, Shibuya fails to disclose or suggest generating a reproduced image, which includes characters having the second character size, based on the read character font, the type of which is selected by said selecting step.

In light of these deficiencies of Matsubayashi, Shibuya and Gray as discussed above, Applicant submits that amended independent Claims 1, 8 and 9 are now in condition for allowance and respectfully requests same.

The other pending claims in this application are each dependent from the independent claims discussed above and are therefore believed allowable for at least the same reasons. However, as each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, individual consideration of each dependent claim on its own merits is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the entire application is believed to be in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested at the Examiner's earliest convenience.